2: Redfield & Villa Rojas E-4,5 (1938) 1939 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

and four *chuycales*, who are in charge of sacred matters. Certain shamans, called *dzunubiles*, also participate in calpul government.

In Cancuc, Villa did not inquire into the matter, but in Oxchuc and i. Bachajón the calpules have separate patron saints and are known, in the case of Bachajón, by the names of San Sebastian and San Geronimo, in the case of Oxchuc, Santo Tomas and La Trinidad. In the church at Bachajón the santos belonging to the north calpul, San Sebastian and two others, stand on the left side of the church, while San Geronimo, San Manuel, and the Virgin, representing the south calpul, stand at the right side. It appears, however, at least in the case of Oxchuc, that the festivals of these saints are maintained by the people of both calpules jointly.

The antagonism between the calpules of Cancuc has expressed itself from time to time in violence. During Villa's stay it was rumored that the people of the southern half were about to attack those of the northern half, and indeed, shots were fired. Blom and LaFarge reported "a dragging feud" in this village.[28] Apparently marriages may and do take place between the calpules; there is no indication, however, that they are exogamous.

In Oxchuc a principal annual ceremony attends the transfer from one calpul to the other of a certain sacred book. This greatly venerated object was, after some reluctance, shown to Villa. He was requested to deliver to its custodians a dozen rockets, some candles, and some incense, he was then allowed to examine it in the presence of the chiefs and the chuycales of both calpules. It is a notebook of twelve paper sheets, 40 by 20 cm. in size; it has a deerskin cover. Of the twelve pages, nine bear writing, all but one on both sides. The text appears to be a series of orders set down by the Spanish authorities in the year 1674. The book is kept in a black wooden box; before and after removing it the chuycales prayed, kneeling, while incense was burned and the rockets were discharged.

The book is called *cahualtic* "Our Master." The ceremony of transfer of this sacred object takes place during the thirteen days beginning December 31. The principal members of the government of both calpules, numbering thirteen, assemble in the cabildo. The book is placed on a table with thirteen candles, thirteen rosaries, thirteen calabashes of lime mixed with tobacco, and thirteen vessels of atole. During the thirteen days the men remain segregated in the cabildo without contact with their homes or with women. Many prayers are uttered. At the conclusion of the period the box containing the book is escorted in solemn procession to the place it occupies during the rest of the year—not in the church, but in a special hut on the outskirts of the calpul of La Trinidad.

Information which Villa received from Indians of Chanal on the customs attending marriage differs in a number of respects from the account given by Blom and LaFarge,[29] or supplements that account, and therefore may be summarized here. There are no professional marriage negotiators. The boy's parents pay, ordinarily, four visits to the girl's parents to complete the agreement. On each visit they bring bread, eggs, fruit, and especially rum. The boy is expected

[28] Blom and LaFarge, 1927, 2: 387. [29] *Ibid.*, 2: 358–359.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

saw houses and fields, lying away from the trail, and at a bend before us in the distance a perpendicular wall of yellow and red rock, about 400 meters high, framed in green foliage. A vertical, shining white band, the waterfall "Chegua," cut the center of the red cliff.

Toward evening we made camp by a small stream not far below the rim of the valley, 980 meters above sea level, and rolled ourselves in our blankets just as a downpour started to drum on our tent-fly.

Early in the morning a few Bachajon Indians came stealthily out of the bush to look at our strange outfit. They talked with our Indian carriers, and evidently found out that we were not bad people, as they soon came near to our camp to talk with us.

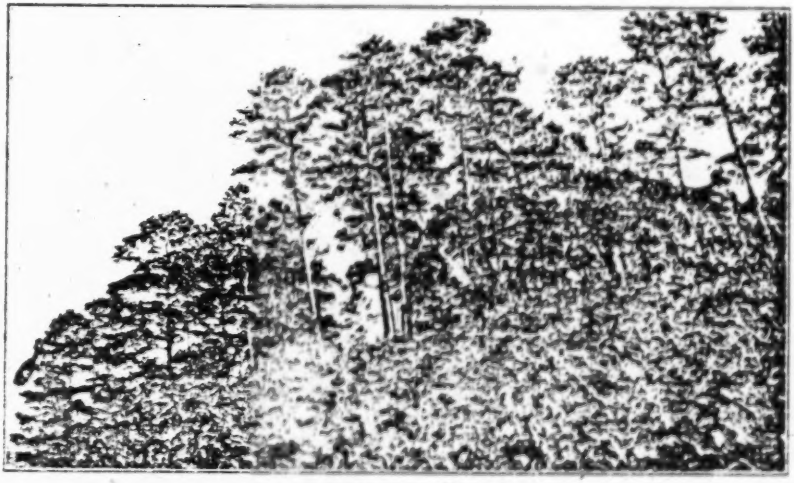

FIG. 123—Bachajon, Chis. Pine Forest.

It was a cool morning and the bottom of the valley was hidden under great soft banks of white mists with the mountains appearing above in sharp silhouette against the morning sky. Soon we reached the rim of the valley and looking back towards the north, saw the many mountain ranges we had crossed and also the Don Juan mountain along the foot of which we rode towards Palenque.

The vegetation changed to low oak-like bush over ground covered with fern-like moss and pretty wild iris. As we rode downward to the next valley new mountain ranges appeared before us and we could see the pine country at a distance. There is no transition from tropical vegetation to pine forest. Change in soil is

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

137 Change in soil is
134 probably the reason for change in vegetation. The tropical forest grows on black humus soil and the pine country is underlain by a red sandstone which weathers into a heavy red clay. The contact of this sandstone with the limestone country on which leaf trees grow lies about an hour's ride north of the village of Bachajon.

[133] The pine country is very hilly, the trees are scattered over a carpet of vivid green grass cut by the strong red line of the soil of the trail like a scar (fig. 195).

114 It was like riding through a magnificent park, up and down the hills and across small streams. Our poor animals had a hard time on the slippery trail. La Farge's horse gave out, and he had to change his saddle to a spare animal.

361 The Bachajon Indian village came in sight, lying on a hill in the
342 middle of the valley. It was well after noon when we reached the
346 dilapidated, grass-roofed and mud-walled huts clustered around the huge ruin of an old Spanish stone church. The Indians use a new church which they have built of the same material as their houses.

122 The house of the Government agent lies in the middle of the
344 village and here we were quartered in a room, the floor of which had just been covered with a carpet of fresh pine needles.

123 The Bachajon Indians are reputed to be unfriendly to all travellers, so we were not surprised when the Indian chief of the village told us that he could not furnish fodder for our animals or men to carry some of our cargo. To all our questions he answered "Mayuk," or in English, "Ain't got none." But when the chief, a little later, heard from our Encanto men that we had been friendly to them, and that furthermore, we were friends of the big father President in Mexico City, he changed his attitude.

648 The Government agent is sent to the Indian village by the civil
[651] authorities of the neighbouring Mexican town of Ocosingo. He is
[653] supposed to collect certain taxes, raise labourers for public works in the Mexican town, and help the Indians with their affairs. He is highly unpopular among the Indians, who counteract his orders through a remarkable system of passive resistance. They say "yes" to everything and do nothing. The only reason the Indians tolerate
[273] him is because he keeps a small store and sells liquor. The Indian is very fond of sugar-cane rum, and every Saturday and Sunday
[123] all the villagers generally get drunk. The agent complained bitterly that the Indians were not selling him any food supplies and was astonished when they sold us chickens and eggs.

361 Most of the Bachajon Indians live hidden away in the bush. Only the families of the chief and the village officials live around the old church ruins.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5/(1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

the old church ruins. The chief and the officials all spoke Spanish, but the only one who knew how to read and write was the town secretary, a 15-year old boy.

After dark the Indians gathered in front of the municipal house and presently some of the elders made signs that they wanted to talk to us. We followed them into the dark out of earshot of the agent, where the Indians told us of all their sorrows and difficulties, asking if we could not help them. They said that the agent tried to raise unjust taxes, that they were forced to do much work for the Municipal President of Ocosingo and did not have time to look after their own corn fields, and also that they were molested by the managers of the neighbouring properties. They asked us to bring their complaints before the Central Government, which we have done.

From there our route followed the main trail, or Camino Real, between Chilon and Ocosingo. A few hours ride through pine forest brought us to the top of a pass from where we had a magnificent view over the Ocosingo Valley. We could see the Indian village of Sivaca, and the white walled, red tiled houses of the Mexican town Ocosingo, lying on a green carpet of extensive grazing land. Down over the mountain side we scrambled towards the valley bottom, and by noon the hoofs of our animals clattered against the cobbled stones of Ocosingo's streets.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

important in Maya Chronology. The writer went to draw the monument, but could not finish it the same afternoon as it began to get dark. The following morning the work was continued and we found that a part of the monument was missing. While working, the owner of the land arrived and told us that there was another stone nearby. This turned out to be the missing fragment, and when the two parts were placed together they carried the Initial Series date 9-12-10-0-0 9 Ahau 13 Zotz, or 422 A. D., after our reckoning.

This was an important discovery, and we persuaded the owner of the Ubala ranch, where we found the monument, to bring the two stones together. His intention was to use the lower part of the monument, which had a large hole in its centre, as a rim to a water tank.

We found a total of nine carved stones of different sizes in and around Ocosingo. All were of the typical yellow sandstone common to Toniná monuments, and there is little doubt but that they all come from these ruins.

Our stay in Ocosingo was very delightful. The children of the village eagerly hunted monuments for us, and our arrival made a boom in the local market. Usually the inhabitants spend their time passing a few pennies from one to the other. One day A makes bread and sells it to B, and the next day B sells bread to A. Now we added a few cents to the city capital.

On the day of Corpus Christi the women, with their heads wrapped in black shawls, went to church many times; the men did less work than usual; and the children played baseball on the Plaza. A quaint phraseology, a mixture of American baseball words and Spanish swearing, cheered the play.

While drawing one of the monuments behind the church, we heard an organ playing inside. Suddenly the music swung into some cheerful opera tune, later to return to serious religious music. We had the feeling that whoever was playing suddenly felt gay and happy and decided that the good people of Ocosingo did not know what the music was anyway, but thought anything coming from a church organ was religious, so why not be happy for a short moment?

Indians went back and forth over the Plaza, often filling the door of our room to watch the strangers. Ladinos would come to pay their respects and offer help, and both the Padre and the school teacher often came in for a chat. There was an extraordinary feeling of peace in the little town, a silence which became more notice-

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

123 able when broken by the clattering of horses hoofs against the paving stones.

172 114 From the Plaza one can see a great part of the valley and surrounding mountains. When the sun in the morning falls on the San Martín mountain, one's attention is attracted by a spur on this mountain which strongly resembles a pyramid. We asked about this and were told that it actually was an ancient mound. Therefore, one morning, we rode to the foot of the San Martín.

Reaching a small ranch, we left our horses behind and ascended on foot. A spur of the mountain had in ancient times been levelled and shaped to the form of an immense truncated pyramid, rising in terraces.

778 114 We had heard that there were caves in the mountainside, and that every year, on the 3rd of May, the Indians come here to worship the god of the mountain. Soon we reached a small cave, or rock shelter, and upon entering saw that a tunnel led into the dark. This we followed, with lighted candles, into a small cave, and there on the floor we found signs of a small altar.*

We took great pains not to disturb anything on the altar, returning to the mouth of the cave, and emerged into the glaring sunlight. We then climbed to the top of the pyramid, and found a large level area in the center of which stood a small mound. On top of the mound Indians had erected a wooden cross and at its foot we found bunches of pine needles, also remnants of burnt copal incense. Evidently this also was a place of Indian worship.

114 133 172 361 Sitting on top of the mound we had the whole Ocosingo valley at our feet. The red roofs of the town lay 500 meters below us. The top of the pyramid, called Chacalchib, is 1,440 meters above sea level. Far away we could see two other hilltops that likewise had been turned into pyramids. On the northern edge of the valley lay Campomtik, and further away on the same side we could distinguish the ruins of Toniná. On the southern side of the valley was the mountain-pyramid called Cololté. All these places were later visited.

133 137 361 172 The valley floor spread out before us. Here and there lay small ranches, and patches of pine forest. Several groups of mounds were easily distinguished, as those of Santa Teresa just outside Ocosingo on the trail to Bachajon. At the head of the valley lay Sivacá, the Indian village.

172 114 On the level top of the pyramid were rows of stones, indicating old house foundations, but though we made a careful search, we found no monuments.

*For Description, see Chapter XV.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

We have divided Maya history in two groups, the Old Empire and the New Empire. Of the history of the New Empire we know a considerable amount, but our knowledge of the Old Empire history is scant. We know the area in which it flourished as a whole, like knowing Greece without being aware of Sparta, Athens, and Corinth. Here in front of me lay one of the first hints of the subdivisions of the Old Empire. Knowledge will advance, and soon we shall be able to tell about the rise and decline of states and cities, to revive the history of the foremost people of ancient America.

Nearly due north across the valley lies the Campomtik pyramid. La Farge visited it while we worked at Toniná. It, too, is a remodeled mountain top, and as it is covered with grass, it stands out sharply against the forest-clad hills. It consists of a series of terraces with a depression which has stone-faced terraces and floor. From the valley bottom the hill rises 280 meters, of which 105 meters (325 feet) have been terraced. Broken pottery is found in various places on the hillside, and on the top now stands two wooden crosses, set there by the Indians. The name Campomtik means "much yellow incense." Incense was burned on the hilltop until quite recently. At such times they burned great fires, and shot off many rockets bought in Ocosingo. Finally the celebrations got too fervent for the Catholic Father, and he had the Indians driven away by the town officials. Generally, though, the Padres let the Indians alone when they celebrate in honour of the ancient gods (fig. 201).

Outside Ocosingo, where the trail divides, one going to Bachajon, the other to Sivacá, lies a group of mounds called Santa Teresa. Rumors that Indains had buried church treasures here after an uprising, led the townspeople to make a large excavation. According to some people in Ocosingo, they found a small wooden sanctuary, and a beautiful clay bowl with a fish on its lid. This bowl later was bought by Seler.*

It is remarkable how persistent are rumors of buried treasures. Every Ladino expects to find "dinero," money, in any mound, and they are usually sadly disappointed. Also, most of these people believe that we find money, else why should we dedicate so much time to our explorations? We had a case where one man offered to go fifty-fifty with us if we would explore a mound on his lands. The whole mound at Santa Teresa has been dug through, and it is told in Ocosingo that the excavators found, not money, but a small wooden sanctuary with a saint inside. We hear every day, when among the Ladinos and Mexicans, stories of church bells of solid gold, and cocks that crow at midnight on top of the mounds.

*Seler, E., 1901. Fig. 278.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Bachajón

is negative. Among the Bachajon, face hair was very slight, or negative, even on men of past middle age. At Sivacá the Alcalde, an elderly man, had a small beard. This is more commonly found among the Indians further in the Highlands. A slightly taller and more heavily boned type here also suggests the Highland influence (figs. 279-280-281-282-283).

Temperamentally, the Bachajon were by far the least pleasant Indians with whom we had to deal. They are drunken, revengeful, and murderous. The murders, usually the sudden outburst of a long-nursed feud, are sometimes so appallingly brutal that one would think them committed by an abnormal or degenerate people.

FIG. 279.—Huixmachital, Chis. Bachajon men.

Yet, at the same time, these were the most independent Indians we met, controlling their own lives and way of living, and are left very much alone by the neighbouring Ladinos.

All the Indians are outwardly restrained, at least in the presence of strangers, although an accident, such as a narrow escape, shows them to be volatile and ready to express emotion. At home, they are cheerful, and laugh willingly. In bursts of feeling, as during an uprising, or one of the murders mentioned above, capable of any outrage, ordinarily they are not a cruel people. They showed themselves always responsive to friendly advances on our part.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Bachajón

mate butt of any joke, contemptible, and with no inherent rights. The native ceremonies and beliefs, even when closely parallel to their own, are considered mere ignorant superstitions. Only what is definitely Catholic is respected. Small shrines may be desecrated at will. Behind all this, mindful of past uprisings, lies a certain amount of definite fear of the subject people. There are, of course, many exceptions, especially among the more intelligent ranchers who from their patriarchal position or intimate relations have come to understand the natives as human beings.

The effect of all this on the Indian is suspicion of the ruling class, reluctance to impart information, distrust of friendly overtures. If one hails an Indian in the streets of a town, he will frequently run away. Once convinced, however, that an individual actually likes them, and is genuinely interested in them, their response is warm. We received many small favours and acts of friendship in notoriously hostile villages.

Fig. 103—El Real, Chis. Tzeltal girls.

In their culture these people belong to the general type characteristic of all Southern Mexico and at least the nearer parts of Guatemala. They depend primarily upon farming for their livelihood, with corn as the staple crop. Calabashes, melons, beans, tobacco, bananas, and cotton are raised. The farming is carried on by the same wasteful "milpa system" that has been described in Chapter XI, the old Maya method that was eventually responsible for the abandonment of many cities. In the case of the Bachajon, it has already become one cause for deserting their villages. The chief food is dried corn boiled with lime and ground by the women on the stone metates which were described in dealing with the Indians of San Martín Pajapa. It then may be baked on a flat griddle, making tortillas, or kept to drink with water as *posole*. The one universal tool and weapon is the machete, varying in form from tribe to tribe, but always made by Collins & Co., of Hartford—part of one of the most amazing industries in the world.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Bachajón

123 Visiting such a house is not a mere, simple social affair. Here, 648 on a steep-sided and slippery natural hill, lived a family belonging to a notoriously exclusive people. Our hostess seemed suspicious of the visit at first, although one visitor was a "Melicano," one of the pair who had already acquired a good reputation with the Indians, and his guide, Señor Aguilar, was known to be a friend. Men in felt hats and boots seldom visited those houses for good purposes; at the best, they might be expected to make off with a quantity of eggs and tortillas without paying their value—at the worst, the head of the house might be haled away for forced labour, or there might be a fight, the pigs killed, and the little hut set afire. The family consisted of a married couple their small son, and two grown girls. On our first visit the wife alone was there. She was at first sullen and a little frightened, but becoming reassured by degrees, showed herself to be a placid, dignified woman, pleasant, neat, and in many ways an ideal type of the traditional housewife. After we had given medicine to one of the girls for cold, and to the husband for mild fever, with a gaudy chromo of a saint to decorate the family altar, they came [342] to take us for granted, → and allowed us to see unfolding the harmonious, dignified family life, with its feeling of unvoiced yet real affection that is so typical of the American Indian where European contact has been slight. The 342 little house, only half walled, and small—about 15 x 13½ feet—was [353] always neat, its dirt floor swept clean, each small posession in its [356] place. There was a faint smell of wood-smoke and earth, with the scent of the rich jungle drifting in, the sound of low-voiced talk, wind in grass, or the grind and thump of the metates, now and then laughter.

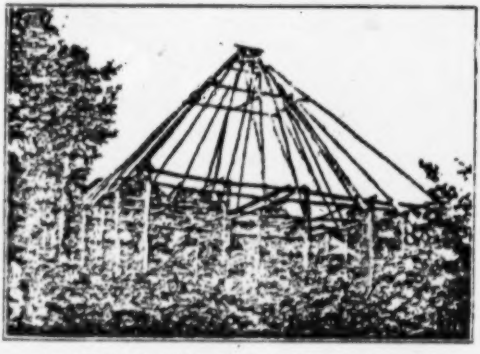

FIG. 287—Cancuc, Chis. Frame of house, illustrating type used in whole area.

The house was a rectangle, 4.90 x 4.20 meters (figs. 288-289), the front of the house being on a short side. The back and slightly less than half of the sides were walled with close-planted, upright [352] poles, without plastering. To wooden beds, *wairyivel*, like low tables, were built into the corners thus framed. Four corner-posts,

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Bachajón

Five wild boars' jaws and an armadillo's tail hung in the eaves so that the dogs might see them, to prevent their going away or losing heart. A swizzle stick, *mahas*, about 40 centimeters long, was used for stirring cocoa. It is made by cutting a twig above a joint with four branches. Two rat traps, *yakul*, just outside the hut, were exact models of the larger deadfalls used for jaguars (see fig. 308).

Add to this the clothes on the inhabitants backs, and the man's machete, and you will have a complete list of the worldly possessions, large and small, of a Bachajon family—altogether some forty-four different kinds of things. We assembled as many together as possible, arranging them as for a feast, and placed in the middle the small son of the house, and a little monkey of a boy, Miguel, who accompanied us to run errands (fig. 292).

Fig. 292—Bachajon boy guests.

If mud-plastered walls are added to this description, you have a typical Ocosingo Valley house. Change the grass roof to palm, it is the kind to be seen in the jungle country.

At Muxculja (*muckul ha*, "Covered Water"), in the jungle, our Indians built us a trail shelter or hut of the type called in Spanish *champa*, and in Tzeltal *tutna'*, "small house." This enabled us to note the manner of building the frame-work and laying on the roof. The kind of *champa* built for us, with an A-roof and gable ends, is called *gwakac na'*, "cow house"; the more common type built by the Indians when alone, a simple lean-to, is called *lestce-pat* (should be *lestce-pahk?*) "only one wall."

Our shelter being more than usually pretentious, we could observe most of the steps in building a true house, although, of course, the form here was different and the construction much lighter (figs. 293-294). It was three meters, fifty-one centimeters long by three meters wide, two meters high at the ridge-pole, one at the eaves. It had no walls. From the construction of the outline of the frame to the completed thatching it took fifty minutes for four men, later only two, working without haste.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Bachajon
Tenango
Sivacá

dark gray in colour, with a considerable admixture of fine limestone gravel. As far as could be ascertained, the mixture is worked without other preparation than that of dampening it to a good consistency.

The actual pottery making, *hutsul ya pas ŏcom*, ("I am making a cooking pot"), which is done by the women, was observed at Sivacá. Some of the men of the village had worked for us at Toniná, and they, particularly the heavy set one on the extreme right of the picture (fig. 297), a cheerful and very thirsty fellow, remembered me as a friend. A few poor jokes and a handful of cigarettes won the men over, so that the visit became less an investigation than a triumphal tour, escorted by the whole male population, the Alcalde leading, in and out through the village. It really was very good fun. We wound our way among the huts, seeking the

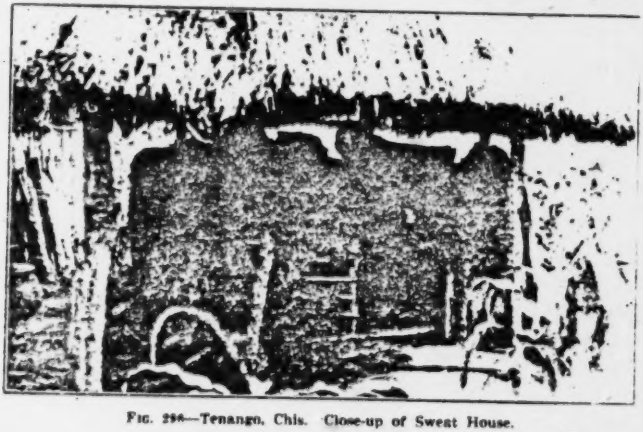

FIG. 296.—Tenango, Chis. Close-up of Sweat House.

shade wherever possible, scuffling up a good deal of dust, now and then tripping over a pig or a dog. Whenever we came to an orange tree, someone would climb it, to come down with a handful of little, green fruits, so poisonous to look at, and so very sweet and refreshing to eat. They dragged out specimens of all their pottery, and at last lead me with some pomp to a house in which a woman was at work. The good wife did not in the least understand this visit, and was not at all sure that she liked it. All the men clamoured at her at once, telling her to come out and be photographed. Finally she brought her clay and unbaked pots, setting all in the sun, still a little bit afraid that this meant some new Ladino imposition. She set to work as though finding some relief from her embarrassment in the occupation.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Sivacá

286 126 123 Our Indian hostess at the Encanto house was commissioned to make us a sash; after observing and photographing the process (fig. 300), we bought the loom with the unfinished piece on it. At Sivacá the army of guides produced a woman who was weaving cloth, and another who was just preparing the thread for the loom (fig. 301). The former was very bored and matter-of-fact about the whole pro-

323

Fig. 299—Sivacá, Chis. Pottery Forms.

A. Ocom. C. Tzameta. E. Hutstahibe. G. Awalike.
B. Pok'et. D. Hor'mo. F. Tseta. H. Tzistcinats.

286 126 123 ceeding, but the latter, a younger one, was at first frightened. At the first sight of me, she put away all her work. As she spoke no Spanish, I fell back upon a corps of seven or eight interpreters, who all spoke together while I looked as harmless as possible. Then she thought that the Mayor of Ocosingo, or the President of Mexico, or some one had sent for her, and packed her things to travel. At last she understood, and then balked. The men explained to me, with some amusement, that she was ashamed—*"dice que tiene verguenza"*—but finally she consented to pose. The result was a picture worth the while; she herself was a good type of young Indian woman, on her back was slung a pretty though somewhat grimy baby, while an underfed puppy and very small chicken completed the family group. The picture also shows a good example of the squatting-seat mentioned when listing the contents of the Encanto house (see fig. 301).

[284] [291] [142] [302] [516] ←

Fig. 300—El Encanto, Chis. Woman Weaving.

283 The spindle, *pětět*, is a stick 35 centimeters long, at the foot of which is a clay whorl, for which no name was given. It is spun with the weighted end resting in a gourd bowl, the upper end held against

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

789 away, leaving it alone, an ear of yellow corn is left with it, that its soul may not be stolen. There is an interesting parallel here with [171] the ear of corn as a "ceremonial mother" in the Southwestern United States. If somebody expresses too strong admiration of a child, fire must be passed near it, or spittle rubbed over its forehead; otherwise the baby will become ill. Infants are particularly susceptible to the evil eye. To cure one that has been thus cursed, a female shaman is summoned, who passes a whole egg all over the baby's body. This is then opened, and the evil eye will be seen (by the shaman) in the yolk of the egg. They throw the egg into the river, or bury it in a secret place. Almost this same belief was found in Chontal of Tabasco. (Customs of San Fernando, Chapter VI, Volume I).

868 Children's education is simple and direct. As soon as a boy is old enough to work at all—at about five years of age—he is given a worn-down machete and set to cutting and hauling wood. From then on, following his father, he learns the man's duties. Girls are started with a miniature metate, grinding corn.

872 The Government maintains some public schools, such as at Bachajon Village, in which a few children learn to read and write, but in general great difficulty is found in obtaining scholars. As soon as they are old enough to study, they are strong enough to be of material help in the house and the farm; the parents do not like to relinquish what represents the interest on the investment of the price paid by the father for marriage, and the expense of the children's early years. Under the present administration, however, efforts to educate the Indians are being pushed as never before.

881 Puberty is attended by no observances of any kind. Marriage,
582 which comes fairly early, has been previously described.

764 At death the ceremonial side is greatly emphasized. The funeral rites combine the idea of mourning with a general belief that the soul of the departed lingers for a brief time about his former domicile. When possible, the house of the deceased is abandoned for a short time, during which period, if any small animal is observed about the house, particularly at night, it is supposed to be his soul. No particular powers are ascribed to the soul, as far as could be found out, but it is considered poor company.

As it happened, a man was killed while we were at the Finca Ercanto, whose funeral rites we could observe. His wife began mourning for him almost immediately—this being in the middle of the afternoon. His body was taken to another house, neighbour to his own. The true ceremonies began after nightfall. Accompanied [123] by Lazaro and Señor Aguilar, the writer went up with a gift of

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

candles for the wife; we had previously sent flowers. The family, being poor, were very glad of our contribution. When we arrived the scene was lighted by one tall candle and the glow of a low fire, mostly coals, with a few weak flames flickering across it. The body was laid out, wrapped in all its clothes and then in a mat bound with cords, forming a bundle more or less resembling a mummy. At its head was a cross, on top of which flickered the solitary candle. The family and neighbours were crowded into the house, the women sitting on the floor about the body, their heads covered with black shawls; behind them the men made themselves as comfortable as possible. They brought such musical instruments as they possessed. The family provided rum. At the dead man's feet squatted his wife, her face almost completely covered by the black shawl.

The wife rocked to and fro, from a squatting to a kneeling position, alternately laying her clasped hands on the pall, and holding them to her eyes, keening. She gasped out a few broken words, half choked with sobs, then let her speech rise higher and higher, crescendo, to a wail that broke off with a half-sob, half-gasp. Thus she went on, falling into a chanting rhythm, which the other women joined spasmodically. The men talked in low tones, and played faintly on their instruments, more or less in time with her. The packed place was very warm, and had the acrid, smoky smell of many Indians.

Later, drinking went on, and the visitors danced, as at any ceremonial. The keening was maintained all night.

When we brought our candles, the woman stopped her mourning long enough to hustle the men, who were slow in setting them on the cross, then she took up again.

The body may be interred the following day in a burying-ground, or in the floor of the house. The former custom, observed at El Encanto, is probably due to outside influence. In that case, the body was carried on a plank by four men. A few more men came along to help, and the wife and three or four women followed. The men wore clean clothes, and had left their machetes behind. Only the wife wore a black shawl, which must have been hot in the sun at high noon, when the procession took place. She continued her keening, and carried a lighted candle. Whenever the pall-bearers laid the body down to rest, she fanned flies away with the dead man's hat.

The grave was well dug, about five feet deep, without regard for orientation. After being lowered into it, the ropes binding the body were cut, that the dead man might rise freely on judgment day. Lumps of dirt and rocks were laid on to hold the mat in place.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

778 paper, brightened with colour added by a cigarette package, a label from a tin of beets in a deep red, a joke in German about the fall of the mark, of which the prevailing tone was pure viridian, and a page of advertising from the Saturday Evening Post. We gave [123] this family a chromo of a saint, which was immediately framed with a sort of wooden box, and set up beside the cross. The table below was used for laying odds and ends on, such as the spindle and a couple of empty aguardiente bottles.

782 788 177 178 Incense, *pom*, and candles, both extensively used by the Indians today, had a place in the old Maya ritual similar to that of the Catholic Church.

The Priest is an important figure to the Indians. They come to 793 him with respect to tell him their troubles, and receive him into their villages with rejoicing. At the same time, there is no doubt that they deliberately hoodwink him as to the orthodoxy of their faith.

796 Although it includes several non-Christian elements, a description of the fiesta observed at Tecojá will give a fair idea of the Tzeltal's church observances. Tecojá ranch has a village of about [241] twenty houses attached to it. The fiesta was held on the twenty- [648] second and twenty-third of June. By custom, the ranch had to allow the Indians this time off, as well as accepting the lowered efficiency on the following "cold grey dawn of the morning after." The owners had, moreover, to provide the rum for the whole celebration, in this case, two demi-johns.

The ranch chapel was thrown open and decorated with fir [794] branches and streamers. The proceedings were in charge of two older men, called *caporales*, who were distinguished by a cross-belting of red handkerchiefs. One house was set aside for the celebrations, in front of which was a table and three triangular, crimson banners with gold edges. By these drumming and flute-playing went on irregularly. Here was the official dispensary for rum, which was given out by the *caporales*. Inside the house, a palm-thatched one with stick walls, about fifteen feet square, some thirty [534] Indians, men and women, were squatting against the walls. There was an orchestra of a guitar and a mouth-organ, occasionally augmented by the piper, who would wander in from outside. This individual, although most amazingly drunk, managed to maintain his [533] musical ability until he fell asleep. The tune they played was like a rather wistful jig, but the time was lively. To this four couples [535] danced, the men facing the women, with a shuffling step not unlike waltzing. They kept very much in one place, but occasionally changed sides. The dancing was evidently a serious affair. This type is called in Spanish *zapatea*, in Tzeltal, *ahk'Out*.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

796 178 However, much hinges on the difficult question of whether or not they still possess the old calendar, without which the divination would be impossible. This will be spoken of again. On the whole, the Tzeltal do not show anything like the robust survivals of old religion that are found in Guatemala; in this respect, also, they have retained only a degenerated form.

796 756 Concerning the attitude of the Indian towards his *nagual*, two stories may be told that have a certain interest. The first is an incident which occurred to us at Cacate-el, the ranch of Señor Tovilla in the Bachajon country. A Bachajon came in to complain that another Indian was casting spells on his fields and chickens. The other had taken a piece of dirt from his cornfield, so as "to gain consent of the guardian" (see above). He was making the corn wither and the chickens die. His power lay in his *nagual*, a *leon colorado* (*saxal-tcoq*), the most powerful that one can have. The Indian who complained had some much weaker familiar. We gave him a brilliant chromo of Saint Jerome with his lion; not only because St. Jerome is the patron of the Bachajon, but also because of the lion, obviously to him the Saint's *nagual*, which anyone could see was larger and more powerful than any known to the Indians. With this picture set up in his house, he felt that he could rest in safety. [123]

Señor Tovilla also passed on to us a story told him for true by an educated and trustworthy upper-class Mexican, an *abogado* (somewhat corresponding to the English solicitor). It is interesting for showing what is commonly believed even by the European people, although somewhat hard to accept. This man stopped at a Bachajon house, wherein he saw two old men sitting with their backs to each other, and two dogs fighting furiously on the floor. When he asked why they did not stop the fight, one of them answered:

"Our *naguales* are in those dogs, and my friend (*sic*) and I are fighting."

He went on to relate that, after the dogs gave up from exhaustion, both the men's faces were covered with black and blue marks.

[829] The Indians and their medicine men have succeeded to a remarkable degree in impressing the Ladinos with the reality and power of their magic, although it seems to be generally felt that it can only be used against themselves. Several very extraordinary stories were told to us by trustworthy people of more than the usual intelligence, and we were occasionally surprised at the reluctance of educated Ladinos to give information concerning native shamanism.

Because of the close relationship, the Indians try to keep secret their *nagual* lest an enemy should start hunting for it. Moreover,

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

fire and then hung up to destroy the impression and prevent leaving behind with it a portion of the soul, on which magic could be worked. Our own observation was that this precaution was carelessly observed.

Although magic may be worked on impressions on leaves, bits of hair, earth from fields, etc., the Indians showed no objection at all to being photographed beyond a certain embarrassment, and very little to being drawn. Often they asked to be photographed, and at some villages posed readily for sketches.

Although, according to Nuñez de la Vega,* there were originally several classes of shamans among these tribes, at present they seem to have narrowed down to one medicine-man type. Primarily these are doctors, but in their practice they preserve certain priestly characteristics. They have a real pharmacopeia, and Ladinos and occasional foreigners who have tried their skill testify to the effectiveness of the medicines.† All their knowledge, however, is kept in greatest secrecy. Just enough medicine is administered at once for a dose, the shaman watching to see that it is consumed, and none held out for identification. Of these we were able to find out virtually nothing. Serpent fat, *junto-tcan*, is in common use as a rub for colds. Head-aches and extreme drunkenness are treated by cutting the forehead with a bit of sharp glass, and bleeding is resorted to in some other cases. The use of the tourniquet in cases of snake-bite is widely known.

All applications of medicine are accompanied by prayers recited in such a way as to be unintelligible to lay hearers. The prayers are an essential part of the treatment.

Shamans are trained from early infancy, being selected probably by the older practitioners. One of them takes the student in hand and teaches him prayers and medicines proper to his particular specialty. With this goes a certain amount of plain magic. Whether a man may then study under others and continue learning is not known; however, they vary in reputation both for their ability at curing, and for clairvoyance, casting spells, etc. Casting spells is a sort of reverse function of doctoring, the man who can cure disease being, obviously, able also to cause it.

One of the two words given for a shaman, *poci'*, shows an interesting resemblance to the Tzeltal for rum, *poc*. This similarity gains importance in view of the real connection between curing and drinking. A shaman definitely will not perform unless he is more

*Op. Cit.
†Cf. Sapper, 1925.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Tenango

mule Borrachito, took him ahead, planning to get into Tenango early and arrange for food and lodging. They went along briskly enough for a while, leaving the pack train well behind. Then the pony stopped, lowered his nose to the ground, blew a moment, and keeled over. There was nothing for it but to unpack him and wait for help. By and by an Indian turned up. Blom hailed him in Tzeltal, "*La!*"—"come here!" He took cover and disappeared. Two more came along the trail, stopped at a distance to look him over, and also disappeared. After a while an Indian's head popped up for an instant behind a stone. All this was rather disconcerting, here in the Indian country, and he had noted that one of the Indians carried a thing that looked like a cleaver on the end of a long pole. He moved over to the mule, hiding his revolver side so that the Indians should not notice that he carried no fire-arms, and put himself in reach of his machete. A head stuck out again from behind a tree. Then two more Indians came down the trail, whom he hailed, asking them to carry the pack boxes into town. At first they refused, but after looking for a long time at his mule, they accepted the job. So he continued peacefully towards Tenango. He came into the open valley just before dusk, with the shadow of the further mountains just on the village, and the mountains themselves dark blue and black under tremendous thunder-clouds. The men and women were all trailing in from their cornfields, with their hoes and machetes over their shoulders. Some stopped a moment to stare at him, then went on, moving with slow steps over the cultivated land.

When La Farge and Lazaro came out into the cleared land, the valley was deep in purple shadow. They reached the Cabildo after dark, too tired to take notice of anything.

Early the next morning, while wisps of cold, silver and pink mist still lay in the valley, the village elders gathered to welcome us, bringing two chickens as presents. They said that they had heard of us already, and would show us through the village. In return for all this, we were to report to the *Tatá Presidente* in Mexico that they needed more land, and were hard put to it to find food throughout the year for the 135 families of the village. At first we were escorted by the whole group, from the Village President down to the Secretary, who was illiterate and spoke little or no Spanish. Later, most of the elders lost interest and trailed off, but we always had enough of a delegation to ensure us good service. It was Sunday, so no one was working in the fields, yet we saw remarkably few people, the women, especially, keeping within their houses most of the time.

As has been said, Tenango lies in the eastern part of a wide valley that slopes down from the eastern ridge until it meets an abrupt.

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 380]

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Tenango

Physically, the people are taller and somewhat heavier boned than the Bachajon. The older men have small beards, close to their chins, of sparse, wiry black hair. Moustaches are faint. The men wear their hair longer on the backs of their necks and over the tops of their ears (fig. 313).

The men's costume is like that of Ocosingo Valley, a long, V-necked tunic without buttons, coming down nearly to their knees, but the trousers are usually rolled up until almost hidden. A plain red sash is worn knotted in front with ends hanging.

We had great difficulty in getting a look at any of the women until finally the officials arranged for a few of them to come and

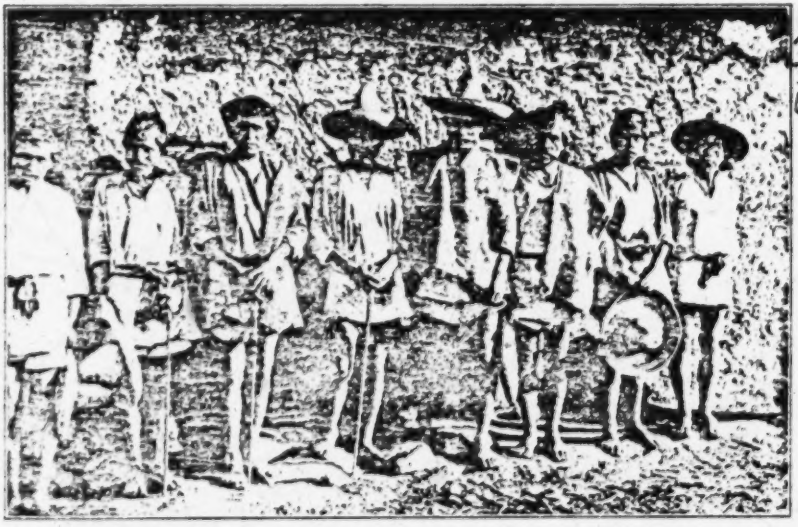

FIG. 313—Tenango, Chis. The Village Elders.

be photographed with their husbands (fig. 314). Nothing could have brought them alone. They were very strange and stiff about the whole thing, and showed more genuine fear of the camera than we saw anywhere else. The women of marriageable age draw their hair together at the back of the head. Around it a long, red, woolen ribbon, about three centimeters wide, is wrapped until it forms a disk standing out like a halo, the exact size being a matter of coquetry. The hair is then turned back and laid along the edge of the disk and wrapped in the last few rounds of ribbon. The result is that it comes out from the head through the center of the disk in a thick mass, then forms a flat elbow where it is doubled back to the

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Tenango

and often have no fringe. We were told that it was impossible to see a woman weaving at that time, but by persistent stalking the writer finally managed to locate a girl at work, whom he observed and sketched from behind a bush. The women here were so consistently shy that no doubt she would have rolled up her loom, which was of just the same type as the one seen at Sivacá, and fled into the house had she known she was observed. Our procession through this very pretty village, too, was a serious affair—distinguished strangers being shown around town by the mayor—and had none of the cheerful joking and general *bonhommie* that produced such friendliness and good results at Sivacá.

Something more should be said about the agriculture here. Ordinarily, Indians go out to choose their own land in the bush and

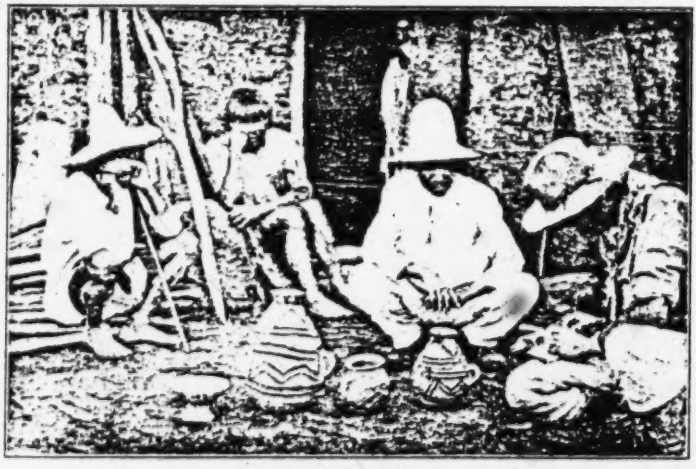

FIG. 319—Tenango, Chis. La Farge drawing pottery.

plant it with little cultivation, placing the corn close together. Here each family has its land assigned to it by the council. As the same field must be planted year after year, the hills of corn are widely spaced, and the ground is turned over as deeply as possible by means of heavy hoes, *ak'en*, purchased in San Cristóbal. As was said, everything is fenced as much as possible. When some of our pack animals got loose in a field, the excitement was intense. In the yards of the houses they raise corn, beans, and a plant related to tobacco. This plant grows nearly as tall as a man. The leaf is rubbed on their legs to cure fatigue. It is carried with lime in a small gourd and offered and accepted for chewing with much the same bowing and formalities as obtained among our ancestors when offering snuff.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Tenango

We had a better chance here than anywhere else to look over the village government. It being Sunday, all were present, the *Presidente Municipal,* the *Secretario,* and council of *Regidores,* elderly men, grave of mien, with small, black goatees. The ordinary villagers treated them with the greatest respect. Each official carried a silver-headed cane with a red ribbon tied to it and the name of his office inscribed on the head. They are appointed to their offices by the government with the ratification of the village. The Maestro works entirely through them, and their orders are absolutely obeyed. Indeed, owing to the independent nature of the Tenangeros, the Maestro is rather like the ambassador of a powerful foreign nation persuading the local government, through tact and very gentle pressure, to behave.

We finished our survey about noon, the Indians appearing unwilling to have us enter their houses. For the rest of that day we spent our time working up our notes into good shape, then teaching the gift chickens to do tricks until Lazaro claimed them for the pot, and in dodging the local officials who, having got themselves slightly tipsy in honour of the Sabbath, came importuning us to give them cigarettes, of which we ourselves were short.

Both that night and the night before, traveling traders built their little pine fires on the mud verandah of the Cabildo. In one case it was a Mexican and an Indian, in the other two Mexicans, to be distinguished from Indians only by the cut of their trousers and a donkey. They travelled with their big packs on a tump-line, long staff in hand, for all the world like a living re-incarnation of the traders shown in the pre-Columbian drawings of the codices (fig. 320). In old times they traded parrots, macaws, obsidian, textiles, jade, and later, gold and copper. Now it is a business of cheap watches, gaudy cloths, and ten-cent jewelry, bringing Connecticut, Hamburg, and Orizaba down to a fiesta in Bachajon village, following the old trade-route along which we were going, in the other direction, to San Cristóbal. Very few of the present Indian tribes

FIG. 320—Travelling Aztec Merchant. Drawing after the Codex Laud.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Cancuc

boulders with care. It still is broad in most places, and has reasonable grades. We climbed to a rather desolate upland of wind-swept grass with a few crooked trees. There was some traffic on the road. We passed a group of Tenejapeños going down to the hot country to carry sugar. The men were ragged and woolly, like those we had seen at Salto de Agua, and their women, in short blue skirts and white blouses gorgeously ornamented with gold and crimson silk, were remarkable for their very pink cheeks showing through dark brown colouring.

The town of Cancuc (*kank'uk*) lies on the rounded shoulder of a long ridge that juts up above the high moors commanding a tremendous view North, West, and South over a jumbled mass of mountain ranges, like a herd of great elephants shouldering away to the horizon. A wind blows day and night, the trees are small and stunted, and the general effect is one of bleakness and height. At an altitude of 1,440 meters, with the unresting wind, it is always cold. The highroad climbs from a ravine up into the village where a small plaza is laid out on a level place. On our left was the big, white church, still well preserved. Opposite it, the Cabildo surprised us, a neat building with tile roof and white columned portico, built in President Diaz' time. Round about were some tumbling and ruined huts, and behind, the village rose on rough terraces crudely faced with stone.

Cancuc has a stormy history. It was the center of the famous rebellion of 1712, the subject of Brinton's "Maria Candelaria."* According to Starr (1904) who passed through here, there is a tradition that the men's long hair, covering their ears, is so worn in memory of the clipped ears which their ancestors received at that time. Recently, there has been political dissension in the form of a dragging feud, and a series of small fights and murders has resulted in those left of the defeated party abandoning the village and setting up their houses in the bush. It is from this that one sees so many huts deserted and beginning to disintegrate, adding to the general cheerless aspect of the place.

We were well received at the Cabildo, where the village officials with their silver-headed canes turned up shortly to look us over. They were younger men than most of the officials we had met previously, and a pretty tough looking crew, much what one would expect of a group that had attained office largely by means of the machete. The people on the whole rather resemble the Bachajon physically, being of a small-limbed type with an average height for men of about 160 centimeters, and nearly beardless. The men wear tunics cut as at Tenango, but decorated with red and yellow em-

*Brinton, 1897; Pineda, 1888.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal-NV9
Cancuc

broidery along all the seams, at the cuffs, and over what would be a pocket in a European shirt. Trousers are either very short "shorts," or replaced by a cotton breech-clout. Hats are seldom worn. Most men carry woolen blankets woven by the Chamula Indians. The red sashes are knotted in front (fig. 322).

The women's dress is the same as at Tenango, but without any decoration, and with a shorter skirt. Their hair is worn in two braids, or done up in a knot over the forehead, forward of where the tump-line is placed.

FIG. 323.—Cancuc, Chis. Men on the Cabildo porch.

These people, for all their turbulence, are very devout, although, like many who are more civilized, they leave most of the expression to the women. The church is swept out daily by women appointed for the purpose. Along about five o'clock in the afternoon all the women drift in, singly or in small groups, pray for awhile, and come out. Looking in the door one sees the large interior almost pitch dark, cut here and there with tiny, yellow candle-flames, and hears a monotonous sing-song drone of chanted prayers. Their festivals center about the church. In this connection they have a very curious custom. There are two scaffolds by the plaza (fig. 323) very small platforms on four rickety poles about four meters high, surrounded by an insufficient railing, arched over with palm branches, and reached by a frail-looking ladder. The drinking which, as was explained in the last chapter, is an essential part of any ceremony, must all take place on top of these scaffolds. It is indeed a miracle that every fiesta does not cause a score of broken necks.

While wandering around to see what he could see, the writer was hailed by an elderly woman who gave him to understand by signs

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Cancuc

that he was invited into her house, presumably to take shelter from the evening rain that was beginning to fall. The house, of which he sketched a hurried plan (fig. 324) was more rectangular than is usual, the prevailing type being square with a pyramidal roof. He entered through a low doorway, closed with a wooden door on leather hinges. Although the ridge of the roof was high, the many cross poles reaching from the top of one wall to the other made it necessary to stoop. The writer squatted by the door, facing the fire, which smoked merrily in the closed room. The old woman immediately set to shaping a pile of tortillas for baking. Along either wall was a well-made bench, decorated with notches along the top and geometric designs on the back, similar to the benches on the Cabildo porch (fig. 325). These and a sturdy table that was stored on top of the stringers were said to be purely local products. By the door stood a big jar, a full meter in height, crude and undecorated (fig. 326). There was the usual collection of ollas and gourds, and one other new form, an open-mouthed pot about eight centimeters high and as many in diameter, flat bottomed, with a handle on one side, called *hütc* (fig. 327). In the thick smoke, it was hard to see anything. I was interested to note that my hostess' eyes watered nearly as much as my own. In the darker end of the house I could make out corn stacked neatly along one wall, and a partition that presumably hid the beds. For a while the woman answered the few questions that I could make her understand by means of signs, my half-a-dozen words of Tzeltal,

FIG. 323—Cancuc, Chis. Drinking scaffold.

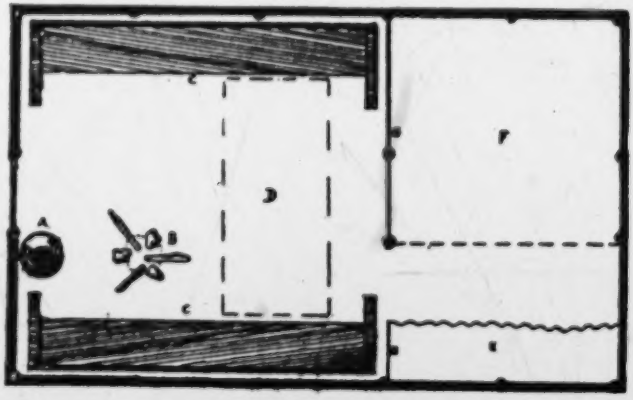

FIG. 324—Cancuc, Chis. Plan of House.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Cancuc

and her three words of Spanish. Then she grew hostile, answering everything with a plaintive *"Ma snaa,"* "I don't know." This went on for two or three minutes, then suddenly she flung open the door and waved me out with no uncertain gesture, saying something about the "Presidente Municipal," and the "Secretario." By this time it was pouring cats and dogs, but there was nothing to do save run for it.

Cancuc is not noted for any product. There are about the same arts and industries as at other towns, but the only ones that amount to anything like a specialty are netmaking and whittling combs. The combs are better and more neatly made than those of the Bachajon, and with a selection of the wood for grain that often produces very pretty combinations. The nets are made by the men, who

Fig. 323—Cancuc. Chis. Bench.

Fig. 327. Cancuc, Chis. Pottery. Hilte. (8 c.m. high).

Fig. 326—Cancuc, Chis. Tall Jar. (1 m. high).

go about rolling the twine or knitting as they walk. The process was described in the last chapter.

Being on the main highway, the government maintains a long shed, like a wagon-shed, thatched with leaves and grass, which is at the disposal of travelers. This relieves the Maestro of duties of entertainment. Towards nightfall, various groups came into camp here, a family of Mexicans, with a big fire, and goods piled high, two traders with their packs, some Chamulas, fine-looking men dressed in white wool tunics, with flowing cotton kerchiefs round their heads, and a couple of Tenejapeños with nets full of apples. The Chamulas, who are remarkably progressive Indians, had come in with a string of mules. After dark, the line of fires in the divisions of the shed, the talk, the fire-lit figures in their varied costumes, with the Church and houses rising on the terraced hill behind made as picturesque and charming a scene as one could possibly imagine.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Tenejapa

133 shadow, another wall far behind. A Mexican told us that Tene-
133 japa lay in the valley thus enclosed. With the cool evening air our
133 animals picked up, taking us along at a good trot. We swung
114 around a green dell, up under one cliff into the opening, over the threshold of a ridge. Some Indians sitting there waved to us. Beyond was a tiny, lush meadow and a brook where some Mexicans were making clay tiles. There was another rocky hillock, around which we swung to find ourselves trotting down a well-cobbled street lined with little white cottages, white-walled gardens, and
361 roses. To us, looking for something yet wilder than the villages we had seen, the neat houses and candle-lit casement windows, the doors of tiny shops, the flowers, and the shingled roofs were an utter surprise. In the streets was a sprinkling of touselled-headed Indians

[346]

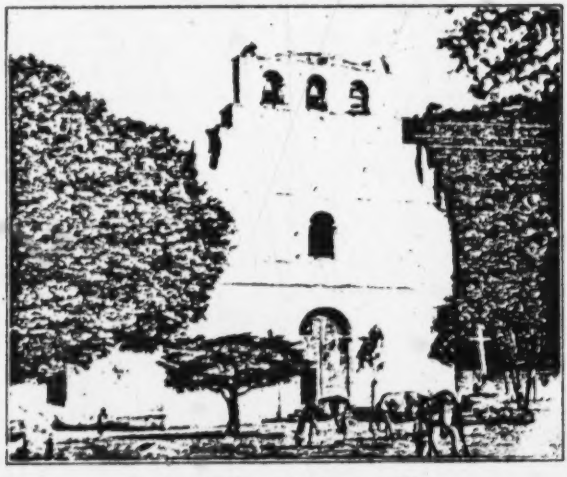

FIG. 328—Tenejapa, Chis. Church and Plaza.

and Ladino people of much fairer complexion than the typical, Lowland Mexicans. We rode past a gaunt, high-shouldered stone church into the plaza, a field of about two acres planted with a few trees, and with a fine town fountain of icy water in the middle (fig.
344 328). Along one side ran the Cabildo, a long, one-storied building
531 with a very deep veranda, gorgeously painted in cubist fashion, red,
123 yellow, green and blue. Here we halted to unpack and present our credentials to the *Presidente Municipal*.

361 Tenejapa is really two towns in one. There is the Ladino town,
563 around which lie the houses of some eight thousand Indians, by local

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Tenejapa

estimate, with their own, regular Indian administration under the control of the Ladino government. The *Presidente Municipal*, a most obliging man, got the Indian *Presidente* for us, whom we photographed by the last light of the day (fig. 329). Through this chief, men were sent out to bring in grass; they returned with enormous, green bundles as big as themselves.

The Indian houses outside the town differ from those previously described in the possession of a sort of porch, or part under the roof in front screened with boards, introductory to the house itself.

The Tenejapeños are strongly built, thickset, and short, with enormously powerful calves. In fact the chief industry of the tribe is acting as porters. They go in large bands to places at a considerable distance to take or bring back loads, competing successfully with the Chamula packtrains. In this the women are as proficient as the men. Their colour is dark, a rich brown, more red than golden, with distinctly pink cheeks showing through in the case of the children and old people. The men are almost beardless. Faces are rather broad and round* (fig. 330).

FIG. 329.—Tenejapa, Chis. The chief of the Tenejapeños.

The essential parts of a man's costume are a pair of shorts and a brown and white striped Chamula Indian blanket, worn as a poncho. Two of these blankets may be comfortably worn in that climate. Hats, when used, are also of Chamula make, of straw with a flat brim, and round, close-fitting crown pointed at the top. Usually they are decorated with ribbons. A sash of white material may be worn, the ends of which, hanging down in front, are elaborately embroidered (fig. 331). The

*Starr (1902) made some measurements upon these people, the most important of which are summarized here. They show an interesting variability.

STATURE IN MILLIMETERS

Mean	Maximum	Minimum	Range	Below 1600	1600–1650	1650–1700	Above 1700	Total
1,557	1,722	1,402	320	75	19	6	1	100

	Mean	Maximum	Minimum	Range
CEPHALIC INDEX	76.9	84.4	69.8	14.6
FACIAL INDEX	81.6	94.5	68.6	26.0
NASAL INDEX	88.8	102.2	64.1	38.1

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Tenejapa

shorts are also usually embroidered in red and yellow. The chief had such a pair, very fine and gaudy, which we asked to see. He took them off to show us, but when we tried to buy them from him he became furiously angry and abusive. Sandals, when worn, are of the ordinary type. Most of the Indians carry a staff of some kind.

The women wear the typical blue skirt, but the blouse, cut like a poncho, is usually tucked inside and heavily embroidered about the neck and shoulders. This work takes a long time, and the finished blouses are valued very highly. When worn outside they nearly cover the skirts, which are just knee length. Red sashes with a yellow stripe from Tapachula, of the kind worn also around Ocosingo, bind the skirts at the waist. Hair is done in two braids with dark red ribbon, or tied up in a knot over the forehead as at Cancuc.

Fig. 89—Tenejapa, Chis. Indians in the street.

Men and women alike wear cheap, gay-coloured necklaces, usually rosaries.

The Indians move with great freedom through the town and lounge in company with the Ladinos on the broad porch of the Town Hall. The officials are distinguished by silver-headed canes with black tassels. In lieu of a Maestro, they are directly under the Ladino *Presidente Municipal*, and their disputes are tried by the local judge. Their lawsuits have a mediaeval air, carried on publicly with great clamor on the Town Hall porch, and all concerned speaking with the utmost freedom. A breach of promise case was observed in the course of trial. It went on for at least two hours with never less than two Indians, usually women, speaking at once. One could not but admire the patience of the rather bored and indifferent judge.

The cargadores from Cancuc arrived shortly after dark, still lively despite the long day and steep climb. More remarkable still,

121 of beverage alcohol is functional or dysfunctional depends on
273* socio-cultural contexts which need to be uncovered in every next case in which such use is investigated. A description of the relation of drinking patterns to their socio-cultural context, then, contributes to a steadily growing but still inadequate ethnographic literature without which further cross-cultural perspective will be lacking.

121 The present investigation is devoted to a detailed state-
• 123 ment of how alcohol is used in Aguacatenango. The bulk of the data herein reported came as the result of participant observa-
124 tion for extended periods in Aguacatenango. Some material on the drinking patterns of individuals was gathered in interviews conducted by transcribing informants. These interviews were special Tzeltal conversations in which Pedro Juárez and Mariano Juárez separately read off or otherwise repeated questions directing the respondent to report some aspect of his experience with drinking.

124 Of all the questions which could be asked, we selected
125 seven which are reported by our informants to occur frequently in conversation about drinking and which men answer about themselves if they are asked. Our two transcribing informants then asked these questions of seventy-six men in town. The procedure was simply to ask each person a question, listen to his response, and then write down in Tzeltal a "synopis" of the response. The

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

Acknowledgments

My study of the people of Tzo'ontahal was made in four field sessions, the first in 1957 with return trips in 1958, 1964, and 1965, for a total of eighteen months. Brief visits were made in 1966 and 1967. With each returning visit it was possible to penetrate more deeply into the lives and experiences of the villagers, most of whom were highly resistant to an outsider on the first contact. I began writing the book in 1966, and some of the predictions I made came true before I finished it in 1968. These included the demise of the ceremonial leadership of the *alfereces*—the officials in charge of religious celebrations—the waning of the community status of curers, and the killing of one of my principal informants who had taken a leadership role before acquiring the traditional validation of age and experience in office. The transformations over the period of my study in this community created difficulties in recording and organizing my material. I owe whatever clarification has emerged to the efforts of Jane Olson and Gale Griffin of Yale University Press.

I am indebted to the National Institutes of Mental Health, which made possible the research for this study. I owe an intellectual debt to Sol Tax, who introduced me to the problems and potentialities of the area as a locus for field study, to Norman McQuown, who gave me the first instruction in Tzeltal and provided a grammar which facilitated learning the language, and to Manning Nash, who provided some of the earlier formulations of the culture from which I have borrowed. I am grateful to Duane Metzger and Gerald Williams, who generously provided equipment and facilities for work with informants in San Cristóbal Las Casas in the summer of 1964. Alfonso Villa Rojas, who was director of the Instituto Nacional Indígenista, was of great assistance in the first summer's field trip, introducing me to leaders within the town and in the Instituto's headquarters in Las Casas.

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

The four sides of the square house are protected by palm crosses which were nailed to each of the four corner posts during the ceremony of the initiation of the house. These crosses prevent the entry of evil. A fifth cross on the door post, replaced each year on the Day of the Cross, ensures the guardianship of San Pedro the Martyr, the Lord of Lightning.[5]

The idea of the similarity in substance between a house and its inmates originates in the notions about soil (*lum*) and mud (*ʔač'al*). An origin myth concerning the creation of man indicates that God created man out of soil and this mythical identification is reiterated in prayers when the fleshy part of the body is referred to as *hlumeletik*, our soil, and *kač'aletik*, our mud. Whatever soil man comes into contact with—in his house, in the backyard, or in his travels, may contain some of his soul. This belief is demonstrated in the following practices: When a person's soul is lost because of a fright, such as falling or "seeing a spirit," the soil where the incident occurred is scraped into a shirt or skirt belonging to him and deposited in the soil below the head of his bed. Some older informants say that the soil from beneath the bed is scraped up and deposited in the coffin of a deceased inmate of the house, but I have never seen this done. This intimate relation between soul and soil was best illustrated to us when our landlord refused to let us put a cement floor in the interior of his house since it would interfere with the practices described above and other customs in the house ceremonies mentioned below.

The house is constructed in two stages. The completion of each stage requires a ceremony linking the spirits of the inmates to that of the dwelling. The first stage is the erection of the house posts and the wooden frame. When the roof is covered with wood shingles, thatch, or tile, the family may set up temporary walls of boards. They wait until the rainy season to complete the second stage of building up the walls with mud. The first ceremony, called "fiesta for the house," is for "the spirit which resides in the posts," and the second, called "meal for the house," is to feed "the spirit of the house earth." People believe that the mud walls, like their fleshy counterpart, the human body, require nourishment.

5. San Pedro Martyr is referred to by the Indians as *Tatik Martil* and is identified with the pre-Conquest deity Lord of Lightning, or *Tatik Čaʔuk*.

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

"Good."

They waited a while and the water came. "Are you going to drink?"

They drank, and then they made the sign of the rainbow. The president sent his síndico to meet them. The síndico got drunk on the way. He sat down halfway in the road. The brothers met him there. They were angry that a fiesta was not prepared for them. And for this they left town, and went to live in Chiapas.

This tale is known to everyone in town, and there is no doubt as to its authenticity expressed by those who have given versions of it. When I took some of the Indians on a trip to Guatemala, they pointed out the rocks where the brothers encountered the devil. When they arrived in Guatemala and saw a bus marked Antigua they expressed amazement that the town was still in existence.

Some people claim to have seen the ancestors, whom they describe as wearing the old style costume—a long shirt with the hat now worn by the alfereces. The ancestors are believed to have watched over the village from a mound rising abruptly before the mouth of the cave, called Hol Shan, or Head of Palm, because of the trees growing on it (Plate 1). From this eminence they could watch the streets of the village and see whether anyone was trying to bring in evil (Plate 2). They were able to discern the power of evil in the souls of the newborn and could snatch the soul before its possessor grew up to cause evil. Their human agents in guarding the town against evil were the curers (*ʔuʔuletik*), who in the context of guardianship were called *meʔiltatil*.[7]

Each year on the Day of the Cross, May 3d in the Catholic calendar,[8] a fiesta is held in honor of the ancestors. It refers back to the fiesta which ought to have been held for the returning Shuntonetik, and is performed in the interest of the whole community as a means of ensuring good relations with the ancestors.

Formerly the curers were responsible for conducting this fiesta. An informant recalled the ritual:

7. The guardianship role of the curers is related to the functions of pre-Conquest officials, called *ghcanalum*, "caretakers of the soil" (Calnek 1962:25).

8. The date of the Day of the Cross was changed by the Vatican in 1964. When the local priest tried to reschedule the fiesta in the community, he encountered strong opposition. The Indians continue to celebrate the Day of the Cross on May 3d.

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
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acts of the new officials was to fire the Ladino secretary and install an Indian for the first time. The schoolmaster had won his battle for recognition. In every legal dispute in which the town became involved, the schoolmaster accompanied the town officials as they went to visit departmental and state leaders, acting as their spokesman. He never accepted even expenses for these trips. His satisfaction was in giving advice to the officials on all matters, in being the man whom outsiders consulted before anything could be accomplished, and in finding an audience.

The schoolmaster consolidated his position by drawing together all his supporters in a parent-teachers association, which served as a captive audience for his extended monologues. I was called upon as a witness to the installation of the members, and I took advantage of the occasion to record some of the schoolmaster's rhetoric as he addressed the "parents." In attendance were the president, his brother, four members of their truck-owning cooperative, and about ten other representatives. The teacher told me that they were the best people in town—not one of them had killed anyone! The excerpt below is not complete, but there was sufficient repetition in the schoolmaster's discourse so that nothing is lost.

Schoolmaster: "I don't fight with anyone. We do not come to fight. A schoolmaster is a guide to teach respect. I have thirty-three years teaching in pueblos of campesinos, poor people like you. I am your brother. I am your teacher. The ignorant people do not want to send their children to school. This is a good school, and there are those of you who have succeeded by learning. Ramon Leon was a boarding school student for two years. He and seven others have received scholarships. They accuse me of not working, but they do not know what is happening in the school. Those who know give congratulations to the school. The children of this school won the competition at the conference of teachers. It is neither a poor school with poor students, nor a rich school with rich students, but all are together. They say we do not teach. Compadre" (to president), "is this so? They say we only dance, but at the conference our students won the prize.

"This school is yours. It is better organized than any other. The flag which we had we gave to Villa Las Rosas because they are campesinos;

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
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building. When they leave the cabildo, they take their staffs as a mark of office.

The central room serves as a courthouse, a place for legislating and administering town affairs, for performing marriages, recording births and deaths, and for inaugurating new officials. Everyone who goes to the courthouse has a specific purpose for being there. Regular attendance means that an established seat and place in the order of greeting and drinking is accorded—even to the anthropologist.

Each day the civil officials assemble at the town hall about eight in the morning and take their accustomed places. Sitting is an official act. In listing the duties of the president, for example, "sitting at the table" was given first in order of importance of his functions by two informants, and in the case of the judges, "sitting at the bench" was listed first.

The president opens official mail and dictates responses to the secretary, now an Indian of the village, who pecks out the letters on an ancient portable typewriter. Since typing is a new skill for him, he makes many errors, and his retrials are accepted with patience and sometimes joking by the president and judges. When the president has an order for the police, it is transmitted to the regidor, who in turn passes it on to the police. The police always carry out their orders in pairs. Interruptions occur as petitioners enter. Men come in to announce the birth of a child and receive the name of the saint's day from the president, who consults the calendar; creditors arrive to request that a debtor be jailed for nonpayment of a loan or interest. When official visitors arrive from the I.N.I. or from the Ejido Commission, the president usually rises and stands at attention, agreeing with everything said. If it is an affair of some importance, the discussion may be continued in the schoolhouse, since the teacher has gained political importance in the town. The Indians rarely oppose departmental or federal officials directly; when they are unwilling to comply with an order, they stall for time, figuring that in the long run time is with them.

When the cabildo serves as a courtroom, it provides a setting for airing not only the grievance which precipitated the court action, but also the entire spectrum of personal relations involved. More women than men resort to court, since the drinking customs for men mean that they are more often the violators of norms. Behavior in the courtroom is controlled by a

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
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126
896

no attention; he was one who had sat by himself on the bandstand at recess.

They practice counting from one to five. The teacher then writes the numbers on the blackboard with A E I O U written above them. They practice these for about five minutes. She says them first; they repeat. She then picks a child to point to them, and the class repeats after the child. More children pay attention when the child is directing the class. She has ten volunteers for this job. They use sticks when counting to ten, passing them from one hand to the other. A few are doing it right. Although some count correctly, they do not have the right number of sticks correlated with the number spoken. They proceed to copy pictures the teacher has drawn on the board. The teacher asks one girl why she isn't drawing. The girl says she has no pencil. The teacher says nothing and goes on down the aisle.

The children are dismissed from class and line up, each grade together, in front of the school; the teacher tells them to be sure to come that afternoon or she will punish them tomorrow.

Afternoon

The teacher comes in to say a few words to the children (for my benefit, I suppose). She calls up one little girl and reprimands her in front of the group for coming to school with her hair uncombed and with dirty clothes. The child is frightened and hesitant about coming forward, and the teacher shows more impatience. The child's head is cast down all the time her teacher speaks to her.

[123]

Vowel practice is resumed. The children are told to erase the vowels they have written in their books and write them over. The teacher has each of the aisles recite the vowels in turn. She asks which of the aisles is best. There is no response from the children; she never says which is best.

Two little boys are writing numbers in their books while some of the others are reciting. The teacher takes the pencils out of their hands and puts them on the table. They pick them up when she is no longer looking and continue writing. A little girl begins to cry. She says, when the teacher asks why she is crying, that the boy in front of her hit her. The teacher tells her to hit him back, which she proceeds to do. The boy shows no reaction at all.

They drill about twenty minutes. A few leaders answer while the rest chime in. "Take out pencil and notebook," the teacher orders. About two-thirds respond. She asks them what things there are in the plaza. One little boys replies, "C'ulna" (Tzetal for church). She ignores him and names in Spanish the

621 578 582 them to "overlook" the trespasser, but not many young men are willing to risk the ire of the other barrio bachelors, nor the gossip and sanctions applied to them by their own barrio mates.[1]

621 794 Each barrio plays a role in the political and religious organization of the village by sending an approximately equal number of officers to the Ayuntamiento and the Mayordomías. Although in some years there are more delegates from one barrio, they attempt to correct the imbalance in the succeeding years. [623] The Principales (council of elders) have also equal representation.

621 [573] [575] [312] Escuadrilla groups (adolescent boys' gangs) and unmarried women's Church groups are formed among barrio mates. Women, with few exceptions, used the water wells or pipe lines in their barrio of residence (the exceptions include women who originally came from the other barrio) and who do their washing at places in [496] the river on their barrio side. Men who work together at such tasks as buying and butchering a cow, building a path or clearing an irrigation ditch belong to the same barrio. House parties [527] [123] organized to buy candles for the Church before a special Saint's day are barrio affairs, and no resident of the other barrio (with [515] the exception of the anthropologist) is invited. In the past, there were, in Aguacatenango, religious sororities sponsored by the Catholic Church, and each barrio had a separate one. There

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[581] [587] [1]A man that has married once is considered to have had his share of the available women of the barrio. Second marriages, especially with girls who have never married before, are not well thought of. It is common, then, that second marriages occur across barrio lines. A man finds it easier to cope with the antagonism of the other barrio men (who are expected, in any case, to be antagonistic) than with the bachelors and neighbors in his own barrio, where he has to face the antagonism in every day interaction.

"Why don't you call in the civil guard?" 124

They will say we are women, that we are afraid. My brother wants to, however. 578 682

He communicated several things in this deviation from the eliciting schedule:

Many assassinations are committed regularly in Tzo?ontahal.
They usually occur at fiestas.
The only recourse is to kill one's enemy.
I am a killer, therefore I am prepared to protect myself.
Everyone knows I am a killer.
When I killed, it wasn't a murder but an execution.

796 794 608 554

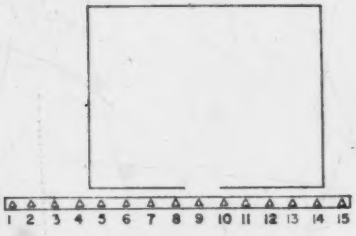

CHART 13 — HOUSE OF THE COFRADE OF THE VIRGIN SANTA LUCIA, FIESTA OF SAN PEDRO SAN PABLO (OBSERVED)

OFFICIALS:

1 Cofrade of Virgin Santa Lucia *(Kobraria Halal Me?tik)*
2 Elder of San Pedro Martyr *(Tatil Yu?un Martil)*
3 Assistant junior for Sacramento *(Ali?bal Nič'nal yu?un Sakramentu)*
4 Assistant junior for Virgin Santa Lucia *(Ali?bal Nič'nal yu?un Halal Me?tik)*
5 Elder for the Christ of the Ascension *(Tatil yu?un Tatik Sanpransisku)*
6 Elder for San Antonio *(Tatil yu?un Sanantonio)*
7 Elder for Virgin Rosario *(Tatil Halal Me?tik Rosario)*
8 Elder for Santiago *(Tatil yu?un Santiagu)*
9 Elder for San Jose *(Tatil yu?un Sanhose)*
10 Junior for San Antonio *(Nič'nal yu?un Sanantonio)*
11 Junior for Santiago *(Nič'nal yu?un Santiagu)*
12 Junior for San Pedro Martyr *(Nič'nal yu?un Martil)*
13 Junior for Virgin Rosario *(Nič'nal yu?un Me?tik Rosario)*
14 Junior for San Jose *(Nič'nal yu?un Sanhose)*
15 Junior for Christ of the Ascension *(Nič'nal yu?un Sanpransisku)*

Since the informant expected that there might be an attempt made on his life in the approaching inaugural ceremony, he was advertising his own strength and willingness to defend himself even if it meant killing his enemy. I was an audience for him to try on poses of self-assertion. 124 578 [123]

[p. 225-B]